

Dialogue-Based Adult Learning



Adults learn best when engaged in dialogue. The word dialogue means “the word between us”. This approach, based on Jane Vella’s twelve principles of dialogue-based learning, recognizes the unique life experiences each adult learner brings to the learning interaction. Adults learn new knowledge, attitudes, or skills best when the information presented is relevant to their life experiences. Using the twelve principles will help you begin, maintain, and nurture the dialogue.

Twelve Principles for Dialogue-Based Learning

- ✦ **Needs Assessment:** Encouraging the learner to participate in determining what is to be learned.
- ✦ **Safety:** Creating an environment that is encouraging and builds trust.
- ✦ **Sound Relationships:** Establishing a connection between the teacher and learner for enhanced learning.
- ✦ **Sequencing and Reinforcement:** Arranging the content from simple to complex and allowing for reinforcement of the learning.
- ✦ **Respect for Learners:** Recognizing learners as subjects of their own learning.
- ✦ **Teamwork:** Involving all the learners by using small groups.
- ✦ **Clear Roles:** Creating equality between the teacher and learner.
- ✦ **Engagement:** Involving the learner in the educational process.
- ✦ **Immediacy:** Designing the learning tasks to have immediate usefulness to the learner.
- ✦ **Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor:** Learning with the mind, emotions and muscles.
- ✦ **Praxis:** Learning by doing and reflection.
- ✦ **Accountability:** Teaching what is proposed to be taught.

Reference

Vella, Jane, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publisher; 1994.